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# Montana Fish & Wildlife Parks

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## INSIDE TRACKS

The Newsletter of Region One

Volume 5, No. 2

Special Spring Issue 1995

## FWP Region One Opens Doors to Citizen Advisors

In an action that some might call unusual and others might call innovative, Supervisor Dan Vincent has decided to open the Region One FWP management team to include a number of citizen advisors from the public. The decision reflects the results of an extensive, two-year look at public desires and suggestions.

"We spent a lot of time and effort asking people what they believed we should do to better represent them," Vincent said. "We now feel we have a pretty good handle on their wants, and we're simply being responsive to them." Vincent said that the overwhelming theme was that hunters, anglers and other recreationists want to have more of a say in FWP programs.

Referring to the plan of adding members of the public to the Region's

internal management team, Vincent said, "I think it's a great way to ensure direct input of the public on how we conduct FWP business in the Region." Vincent added that assembling a general citizen advisory team is more far-reaching than standard committees assembled to look at specific issues.

FWP completed four major efforts over the past two years to analyze the attitudes and desires of the hunting, fishing, and recreating public, including:

- A fisheries information and attitude survey of more than 1,600 fishing license holders in Region One;
  - Interviews with 45 of the 60 license agents in the Region;
  - A general analysis of public opinions and suggestions conducted
- (Continued on Page 2)

### CITIZEN ADVISORS NEEDED...

### Why Get Involved?

By getting involved in this process, you can:

- Help promote Montana's strong hunting, fishing and recreation traditions;
- Help make FWP personnel more available and responsive to the public;
- Contribute to local decision making and local solutions;
- Help FWP be aware of and address issues before they become problems;
- Influence the choice of projects to benefit the Region's fish, wildlife and habitat, and hunters, anglers and other recreationists.

### IN THIS ISSUE

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- 40 YOUNGSTERS GRADUATE FROM SPRING ANGLER EDUCATION CLASS
- BIG RAINBOWS ADD TO ANGLER OPPORTUNITY
- LIBBY HUNTER EDUCATION PROGRAM
- BULL TROUT INFORMATION AVAILABLE



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**PLEASE HELP YOURSELF**

## Thompson River Elk Herd Gets Boost

In a good example of a cooperative wildlife project, managers from FWP, the National Bison Range, and the public teamed up in early spring to relocate 25 elk from the Bison Range to the upper Thompson River area.

The project was coordinated by Harvey Nyberg, FWP Wildlife Manager, managers at the Bison Range, and Flathead Wildlife Inc. President Bob Cole. In the relocation, a mixture of elk calves, cows and bulls were trapped on the Bison Range (where the animals are outstripping their forage) then moved to an area of the upper Thompson River where elk numbers are low.

Many volunteers made the project possible, including 20 members of Flathead

Wildlife. Larry Schultz of the Backcountry Horsemen, Doug Bolender, and representatives of the Hargrave Ranch provided horse trailers to transport the elk.

The elk are expected to disperse and add to the herds in the area.



*TEAMWORK resulted in the relocation of 25 elk from the National Bison Range to the upper Thompson River area this spring.*



# FWP Region One Opens

(Continued from Page 1)

by the Region One management team; and,

- A hunter focus group survey and mail survey targeting major groups of hunters including hunter education instructors, conservation club leaders, commercial interests, and general hunters.

Managers also referred to statewide and national public attitude and management studies. From all these efforts, common themes emerged.

## CITIZEN ADVISORS NEEDED...

### How To Get Involved — Please Do!

FWP will be soliciting citizen advisors from a number of groups by direct mail, including FWP license agents, hunter education instructors, hunting groups, fishing groups, conservation groups, landowners, recreationists, and others.

Unaffiliated members of the public or any member of the above groups may nominate themselves or others by contacting FWP at: 490 North Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT, 59901; Phone: 752-5501. Just say you're interested in becoming a citizen advisor to Region One's management team and we'll send you more information. Members will be selected by consensus of their constituents or by consulting references.

To be effective, the number of citizen advisors selected will be limited to about eight, which is equivalent to the number of internal management team members. Once the initial set of advisors is assembled, they will help decide the details of their function including the length of term served, frequency of meetings, etc.

Those themes, in no particular order, were:

- MORE INFORMATION:** People want more information that is understandable, believable and consistent; more maps, brochures, more media coverage, newsletters, higher profile of FWP; accentuate the positive about wildlife, fishing, hunting, parks.

- ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS:** There is a desire to be actively involved in programs and provide data to FWP; the public wants their input to be valued and they want to be considered partners; want FWP to participate more in rod and gun clubs and desire to have more access to FWP staff (the "closed door" symbol); want FWP staff to be more available for public outreach to other groups. People wish to be referred to as "partners"

rather than customers.

- PROPERLY ADDRESS CHANGE:**

Acknowledge that things are changing but be careful about change; Acknowledge new constituencies and changing demographics; accommodate increased use. People are concerned about fees, degree of development, and tourism at state parks.

- LOCAL DECISION-MAKING:** FWP needs to better communicate clear goals and priorities; make it clear what FWP stands for; involve the public more directly in the process. The public wants FWP to present options within natural resource management sideboards; encourage the public to recommend actions; public wants local decision making; forecast problems/issues, allow enough time for a process to reach a solution.

## Bull Trout Information Available

Bull trout have become a major focus for enforcement and education efforts in all of western Montana. Several new information items are now available at all FWP offices as part of the Governor's bull trout restoration team effort.

A pocket, fold-out guide to distinguishing bull trout from other species is designed to help anglers avoid mistakes and to reduce mistaken harvest of bull trout. This is particularly important because regulations call for immediate release of bull trout caught in most waters.

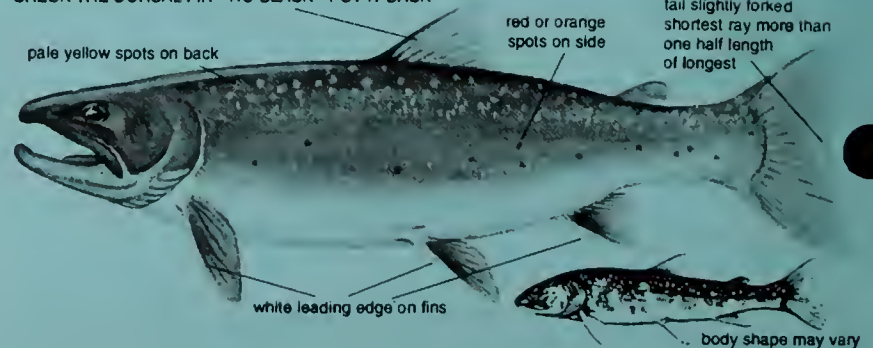
The FWP Commission earlier this year closed Hungry Horse Reservoir to the taking of bull trout, leaving Swan Lake as the last remaining water in Montana west of the Divide where anglers may keep bull trout. According to Region One Fisheries Manager Jim Vashro, the change was needed

to protect bull trout given the repeated drawdowns of the reservoir in recent years. The second item available is a place mat designed to encourage discussion about bull trout and aquatic habitat. The place mat includes fun activities for youngsters on the back; stop in at the FWP offices in Kalispell or Missoula to pick up these free place mats for your family or to distribute to restaurants.

As Governor Racicot has said, the bull trout is an important part of Montana's natural resource heritage; the responsibility for restoring bull trout rests with all Montanans. 🐟

### help save Montana's largest & rarest native trout **THE BULL TROUT**

CHECK THE DORSAL FIN • NO BLACK • PUT IT BACK





# Doors to Citizen Advisors

## ➤ MORE VISIBLE ACTIVITIES:

Visible activities in contact with the public are desired; the public wants more creel census, check station, water safety patrols, parks patrols, parks activities, license agent visits

## ➤ SUPPORT TRADITIONAL

**CONSTITUENCY:** Actively support Montana's hunting, fishing, trapping, recreational, cultural and historical heritage; oppose anti-hunting efforts. Preserve hunting heritage through emphasis on outdoor ethics. People are concerned about the Endangered Species Act; predators; too many studies, not enough action; Tribal issues; commercialization of wildlife; loss of access; road management; loss of habitat; leasing hunting rights; politics versus biology; concerned about unsuccessful FWP programs; want a diversity of outdoor experiences.

From these themes, managers in the Region developed overall goals and objectives, then developed a list of 40 projects and strategies that would accomplish them. The projects address a number of fish, wildlife, parks and enforcement programs.

The role of the citizen advisors will be to help the Region rank the projects, develop new project ideas, finalize a plan, then assist in putting the projects into action.

"We have developed a preliminary set of project ideas based on what we've learned," Vincent said. "But right now they are only ideas. We will rely on our citizen advisors to help us select the most important projects or to help us develop new

projects as needed."

In addition to ranking projects, citizen advisors will provide general guidance to FWP. Although they will be volunteers and will not have regulatory decision making authority, citizen advisors will provide feedback and input on FWP activities and policies, similar to citizen boards in other organizations.

Vincent acknowledges that this open door approach has some risks associated with it, but believes that it is the best way to ensure more effective local decision-making and help FWP become more responsive to the public.

"It's a great opportunity for us and for our partners," he said. 🐾

## Libby Hunter Education Program Continues to Add Improvements

Hunter Education Instructors in the Libby area have continued to add improvements to an outstanding program.

This year, students were organized into smaller classes to improve instructor/student contact. Like other programs, the Libby instructors are testing new student materials like improved survival and first aid guides, and the book "Beyond Fair Chase."

The Libby program also features a strong live-firing component and a sum-

mer advanced hunter education field camp. 🐾

### Needed:

#### Hunter Education Instructors

Like other Hunter Education programs in the region, more instructors are needed in Lincoln County. If you are interested in being a volunteer instructor, call Frank Sichting, Lincoln County Chief Instructor at 293-5757.



## Big Rainbows Add to Angler Opportunity

Ever catch an eight-pound rainbow trout? There are a few out there waiting.

This winter, managers planted about 65 big rainbows each in Lion Lake near Hungry Horse and in Foy's Lake near Kalispell.

In the photo above, Canyon Sportsmen President Cliff Nelson adds 8-pound Arlee rainbow trout to Lion Lake.

### *SPRING Hunter Education Classes are popular in Libby.*

*Instructors  
Larry  
Stroklund  
(right) and Pat  
McKay pose  
with students  
in one of  
the smaller  
classes used  
to improve  
instructor/  
student  
contact.*





# 40 Youngsters Graduate from Spring Angler Education Class

"I went to the class thinking I knew everything there was to know, but I was surprised," wrote 10-year old Teal Hunter about his participation in the March Angler Education Class for youth 10-12 years of age. "I absolutely loved the class," added his 12-year old brother, A. J.

In the popular course which is patterned after Montana's Hunter Education Course, students learn about fishing equipment, casting, flytying, fishes of Montana, and aquatic habitat and ecology. Students work with and dissect real fish. But most of all, they have fun.

The course, in its second year, consists of 6 hours of classroom instruction and 7 hours of field instruction and fishing. This year, the students and parents caught about 100 kokanee between them while ice fishing on the field day at Ashley Lake. FWP Fisher-

ies Manager and fishing fanatic Jim Vashro brought along his high-tech fish finding gear and special fishing rod, and was able to ensure that most young anglers caught at least one fish. Warden Brian Sommers visited the young anglers and talked about water safety and angling ethics.

Volunteer instructors and parents donated about 200 hours to teach the course, along with 5 FWP employees.

Parents were very complimentary about the efforts of the instructors. One parent wrote, "I was impressed with the instructors, the overall organization, and the material presented to the students, not to forget to mention you achieving the most difficult task of all—the kids had a ton of fun while learning so much."

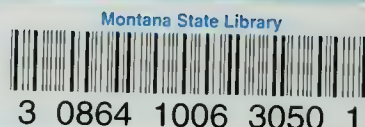
The next Angler Education Class is scheduled for late June.



**OPEN FACE FISHING REEL USE:** Fisheries Manager Jim Vashro demonstrates proper techniques to students in the spring Angler Education Class.



**WARDEN BRIAN SOMMERS** discusses ethics with the Angler Education students on field day.



**INSIDE TRACKS** is published by Region One



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